

PEBB Perspective.

Washington State
Health Care Authority
Public Employees Benefits Board

Important Dates

October 18 – November 30

2005 open enrollment—your chance to change medical and/or dental plans, and add family members to your coverage.

October 26

Open enrollment benefits fairs begin. Look for the schedule with **added locations** in this issue!

November 23

Last day to request an open enrollment booklet.

November 30

Open enrollment ends—last day to make changes using e-Coverage or enrollment form.

Washington State
Health Care Authority
Pete Cutler
Acting Administrator

Public Employees
Benefits Board
1-800-200-1004
360-412-4200
www.pebb.hca.wa.gov

To obtain this document in another format or to request special accommodations, call our Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator at 360-923-2805. TTY users (deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired), call 360-923-2701 or toll-free 1-888-923-5622.

HCA 50-658 (10/04)

Open enrollment starts October 18 – make your plan changes “live” for 2005

Did you know that during the Public Employees Benefits Board's (PEBB) open enrollment period (October 18-November 30), you can go online any time to make account and/or plan changes quickly and conveniently?

Where can I find the information I need?

Starting in mid-October, you can find **additional information on changes to your 2005 coverage**—including benefits and the plans available in your county—on the PEBB's Web site at www.pebb.hca.wa.gov.

Remember, if you **don't want to change** medical or dental plans, and your medical plan is still available in 2005, you **don't need to do anything!** You will automatically continue with the same plans, and your family's coverage will stay the same.

How can I find providers, hospitals, and pharmacies with my plan?

Whether you've decided to keep or change your medical plan in 2005, you can go to the **Provider Directory** to find a primary care provider, women's health care provider, hospital, or pharmacy that contracts with your plan. If you're changing medical plans, you'll also find the physician/clinic code for your provider, clinic, or care system as required on e-Coverage (see next column) or the 2005 *Employee Enrollment/Change* form (available on PEBB's Web site or from your personnel, payroll, or benefits office).

Before choosing a provider from the online Provider

Directory, call the medical plan to verify:

- Provider availability in your county;
- A provider's participation with the plan to serve PEBB members; and
- That a provider is accepting new patients.

How can I make plan changes?

If you wish to change your medical or dental plan for 2005, waive coverage, or reinstate coverage for an eligible family member who previously waived, you can go to PEBB's Web site to use **e-Coverage**. During open enrollment, e-Coverage is an online tool that will allow you to change your plans as many times as you wish. The last changes received by PEBB on November 30 will be your final selection for 2005.



This is your **only** 2005 open enrollment notice.

To find more information or make changes to your 2005 coverage, go to www.pebb.hca.wa.gov or call **1-866-577-2793** (October 18 - November 23) to request a booklet with enrollment form.

We appreciate your patience during open enrollment!

During open enrollment, we receive approximately three times as many phone calls as the rest of the year. If our benefits specialists are helping other members when you call, please be patient. A benefits specialist will answer your call as soon as possible.



For more information or to make changes to your 2005 coverage, go to www.pebb.hca.wa.gov.

Changes to your 2005 coverage

Plan availability

Find out if your medical plan is still available to you in 2005. If your medical plan is no longer available where you live, you need to select a different plan. Otherwise, you'll be enrolled in the Uniform Medical Plan Preferred Provider Organization (UMP PPO) for 2005. However, **even if you wish to change to the UMP PPO, be sure to actively select it during open enrollment** to ensure your enrollment is processed and you receive your I.D. card(s) by January 1, 2005.

Plan changes

- **RegenceCare** will no longer be available. RegenceCare members will need to choose a new plan during open enrollment.
- **Regence BlueShield** is a new plan that will be available in all counties served by RegenceCare.
- **UMP Neighborhood**, a care system option, is open to all employees and non-Medicare retirees who live in King, Pierce, or Snohomish counties. There is no enrollment limit. To enroll in UMP Neighborhood, use e-Coverage at www.pebb.hca.wa.gov or the 2005 *Employee Enrollment/Change* form.

New medical plan premiums

Medical plan premiums have changed. Please see the "2005 monthly premiums" on the following page.

Rule changes

PEBB also adopted certain rule changes to clarify existing rules, including administration of and eligibility for PEBB coverage:

- **Reporting eligibility changes.** Effective January 1, 2005, PEBB members (or their beneficiaries) are required to notify the Health Care Authority (HCA) of any changes that would affect eligibility within 60 days of the change. Some examples of these changes may be death, divorce, Medicare entitlement, or a change in your child's student status.
- **Re-enrolling after waiving coverage.** Effective January 1, 2005, if you or your dependent(s) waived coverage, you may enroll in PEBB coverage midyear if you show proof of continuous, comprehensive group coverage within 60 days of losing that coverage.

You may find the PEBB's existing laws in chapter 41.05 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), and rules in chapters 182-04, 182-08, 182-12, 182-13,

and 182-16 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). These are available on the Office of the Code Reviser's Web site at slc.leg.wa.gov.

Reminders about choosing a provider

- Call the medical plan you choose for 2005 to verify that your provider(s) will be participating with the plan to serve PEBB members.
- If your doctor, dentist, or health care facility discontinues participation in your plan, you may not change plans until the next open enrollment period, **with coverage effective the first of the following year.**
- Both the Uniform Dental Plan and DeltaCare are administered by Washington Dental Service. If you choose one of these dental plans, be sure that you choose a WDS-contracting dentist who participates with your plan.

2005 monthly premiums

School district employees and employees who work for a city, county, port, water district, hospital, etc. need to contact their personnel, payroll, or benefits office to find out their monthly premiums.

PEBB Medical Plans	Employee	Employee & Spouse*	Employee & Child(ren)	Employee, Spouse, & Child(ren)*
Community Health Plan of Washington	\$ 57	\$123	\$ 99	\$166
Group Health Cooperative	20	51	36	66
Group Health Options, Inc.	48	107	85	143
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest	37	84	65	112
PacifiCare of Washington, Inc.	108	226	189	307
Regence BlueShield	102	214	178	290
UMP Neighborhood	25	59	43	78
Uniform Medical Plan PPO	33	76	58	101

*or qualified same-sex domestic partner

How much PEBB coverage really costs in 2005

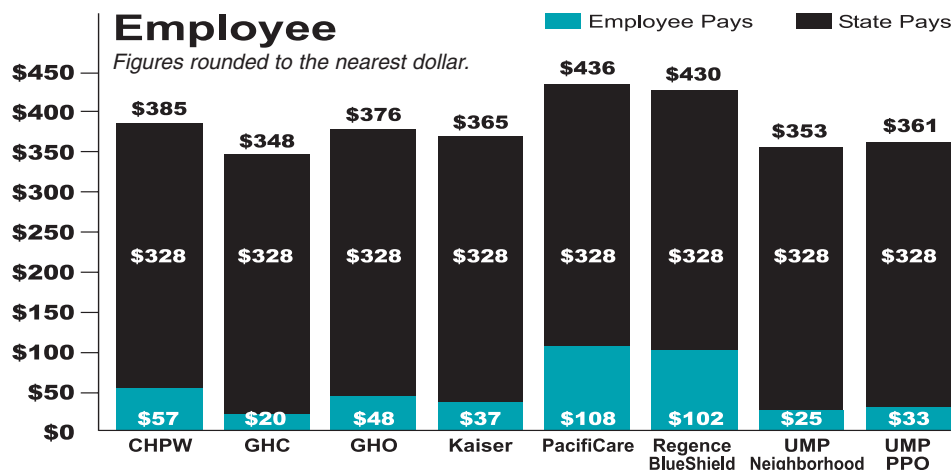
While health care costs are moderating compared to recent years, PEBB's costs still increased for 2005.

To the right, you'll see how much your PEBB medical coverage will cost next year. Many employees' premiums will cost less in 2005; some will cost more. However, the state will absorb much of the plans' increases for 2005, and continue to pay the majority of your PEBB coverage as a benefit of employment.

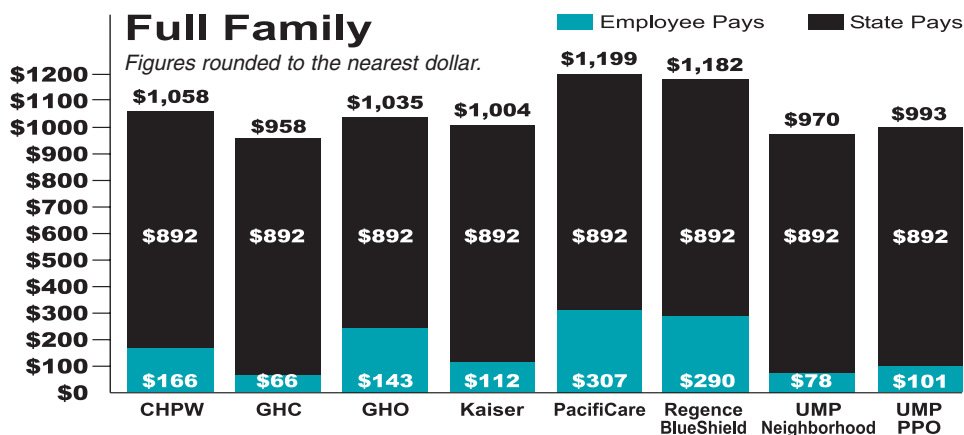
For 2005, the overall cost of providing employees' and non-Medicare retirees' health coverage will rise 11 percent. These tables show how much is paid to the plans—by you and the state.

Please note: Dental, basic life, and basic long-term disability coverage will continue to be covered at no cost to you in 2005.

Total monthly costs to medical plans



Total monthly costs to medical plans

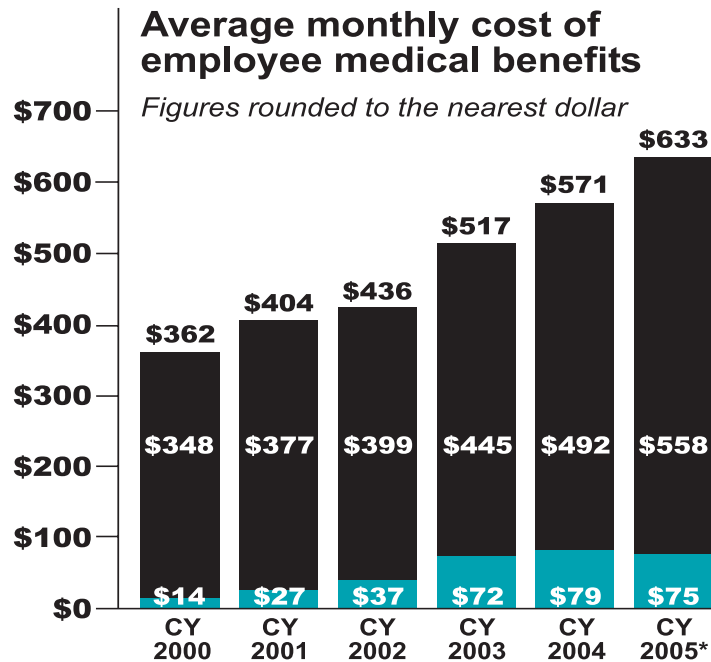


History of state v. employee costs

The table on the right shows a history of what the state has paid toward employees' medical coverage versus what employees have paid. These figures represent a weighted average, based on how many family members are enrolled on the account and how many employees are currently enrolled in each medical plan (based on April 2004 enrollment).

Employee monthly premium (weighted average)

State monthly premium (weighted average)



*Based on employee medical plan enrollment in April 2004. These figures are subject to change after medical plan selections are made for 2005.

Questions and answers

This newsletter contains important information about changes to your PEBB coverage for 2005. Here are some answers on how the changes came about.

Why is RegenceCare going away?

Regence BlueShield, which administers the RegenceCare and Regence BlueShield plans, announced to its members and publicly in 2003 that it would eliminate its health maintenance organization (RegenceCare) by January 1, 2005, so this did not come as a surprise to the Health Care Authority (HCA). However, the company did submit a bid

to serve PEBB members through Regence BlueShield. Regence BlueShield offers the same primary care provider network as RegenceCare, but has a larger specialist network. Regence BlueShield will also be available in all of the counties currently served by RegenceCare.

If I'm enrolled in RegenceCare, will my coverage automatically transfer to Regence BlueShield in 2005?

No. You will need to select a new plan available in your county. Otherwise, you'll be enrolled in the UMP PPO for 2005.

How does PEBB determine the "average" employee monthly premium?

The average employee monthly premium is based on two factors:

- How many family members are enrolled on the account (employee only, employee and spouse, employee and child[ren], or full family); and
- How many employees are currently enrolled in each medical plan (based on April 2004 enrollment).

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For more information or to make changes to your 2005 coverage, go to www.pebb.hca.wa.gov.

Benefits fairs schedule

For more information on PEBB health plans, attend a benefits fair in your area. The times and places are listed below. Maps to the benefits fairs are also available online at www.pebb.hca.wa.gov.

Bellingham

November 18, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Western Washington
University
Fairhaven Admin. Lounge
516 High Street

Bremerton

November 1, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Olympic College
Bremer Student Center
North and South Conference
Rooms
1600 Chester Avenue

Cheney

November 3, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Eastern Washington University
TAW Room 215 (Tawanka)
Elm Street



Ellensburg

October 27, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Kittitas County Fairgrounds
Heritage Center
512 N. Poplar

Everett

November 19, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Everett Community College
Parks Student Union
Building
Multipurpose Room
2000 Tower Street

Lacey

November 12, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Saint Martin's College
Worthington Conference Ctr.
5300 Pacific Avenue SE



Longview

November 10, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Lower Columbia Community
College
Student Center
1600 Maple

Moses Lake

November 4, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Big Bend Community
College
1400 Building Auditorium
7662 Chanute Street NE

Mount Vernon

November 17, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Skagit Valley Community
College
Student Lounge
2405 College Way

Olympia

November 3, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dept. of Transportation Bldg.
Lobby
310 Maple Park

Pasco

November 10, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel
Olympic Room
2525 N. 20th Avenue



Port Angeles

November 2, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Vern Burton Community
Center
308 E. 4th

Pullman

November 8, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Washington State University
French Administration
and Lighty Building
Stadium Way & Wilson Road

Seattle

October 26, 2004

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

University of Washington
Harborview Medical Center
Research and Training Bldg.
1st Floor
325 Ninth Avenue

October 27, 2004

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

University of Washington
Student Union Bldg. (HUB)
West Ballroom
Stevens Way

October 28, 2004

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

University of Washington
UW Medical Center &
Health Sciences Lobbies
1959 NE Pacific

Spokane

November 2, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Spokane Community College
Lair Building
Littlefoot Rooms A & B,
and Sasquatch
N. 1810 Greene Street

Tacoma

November 5, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tacoma Community College
Student Center Building 11
6501 South 19th Street



Tumwater

November 4, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dept. of Labor & Industries
Auditorium
7273 Linderson Way SW

Walla Walla

November 9, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Walla Walla Community
College
Conference Center 185
500 Tausick Way



Wenatchee

October 26, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Red Lion Wenatchee
Columbia River Room
1225 N. Wenatchee Avenue



Yakima

October 28, 2004

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Red Lion Hotel
Garden Terrace
607 E. Yakima Avenue

New for 2005!

PEBB will host six **Health & Wellness Fairs** across the state as part of the scheduled benefits fairs. Health plan representatives at the Health & Wellness Fairs will provide **educational and/or preventive services at little or no cost**, as well as ways to take advantage of the plans' preventive care benefits and wellness opportunities. Community health resources will also be featured. Be sure to note these special sessions shown with this symbol.



Questions and answers

(continued)

When the Board voted on the medical plan rates for 2005, the \$75 average employee monthly premium included these two factors as of April 2004. After open enrollment when the final medical plan selections are made, this average figure may increase or decrease, depending on changes to the average number of enrolled family members or medical plan enrollment.

If the average employee monthly premium will decrease for 2005, why will my premium increase?

Each medical plan's monthly premium is determined by PEBB claims data from 2003, and the anticipated cost risks based on current enrollment. Also, there are differences in how each plan is administered, from how much it pays its

providers to how much it costs to run its operations.

When evaluating medical plans' rates, the PEBB and its actuaries look at each plan's financial statements (as reported annually to the Office of the Insurance Commissioner), administrative costs, and other factors. If the HCA determines that a plan's rate is too high, then it negotiates with the plan to seek a lower rate.

**This is the ONLY open enrollment
notice you will receive!
PEBB open enrollment is
October 18 - November 30, 2004**